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ABSTRACT

Intended for state legislators seeking recommendations for improving arts education in Minnesota elementary and secondary schools, this executive summary presents (1) an historical perspective of comprehensive arts planning grants authorized by Minnesota statutes between 1973 and 1984; (2) needs assessment results, including findings of the Comprehensive Arts Planning Program (CAPP), Minnesota State Department of Education statistics, and results from surveys of teachers, principals, parents, and students; and (3) recommendations for establishing a Minnesota School for the Arts. Thirteen recommendations specifically address topics relating to the need for the school, governance, curriculum components, student selection procedures, tuition, transportation and housing, budget and funding sources, and the school's ability to serve as a statewide resource center for school districts and staff. Findings from recent arts education research and national education reports are then offered as additional support for implementing recommendations made in this report. (LH)

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**ARTS EDUCATION
NEEDS ASSESSMENT
and
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Report to the Legislature

February 1985

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Report to the Legislature
February 1985

Minnesota Department of Education
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION

In response to increasing concerns about the status of arts education in Minnesota schools, the 1984 Legislature requested that the Department of Education make recommendations for improving arts education in elementary and secondary schools.

Specifically, the Legislature requested:

"By January 15, 1985, the Department of Education shall report to the education committees of the Legislature recommendations for improving arts education in elementary and secondary schools. The report shall include:

- (1) a review of the comprehensive arts planning grants authorized by Minnesota Statutes, Sections 129B.17 to 129B.21;
- (2) an assessment of the need for arts programs at elementary and secondary schools with recommendations for expanded arts opportunities for all students; and
- (3) recommendations about establishing a Minnesota school for the arts, specifically addressing: the need for the school; a governance structure; administration and staffing; curriculum components, including academic areas; student selection procedures, tuition, transportation and housing; capital and operational budgets; funding provisions and sources; and ability to serve as a statewide resource center for school districts and staff."

Section (1) refers to an evaluation report on the Comprehensive Arts Planning Program (CAPP) funded by the Legislature in 1983 to assist thirty districts in long-range planning and curriculum development in the arts.

Section (2) refers to a comprehensive, statistically valid study of the status of arts education in Minnesota schools.

Section (3) refers to the report of the Arts Education Task Force appointed by Governor Perpich in February 1984 to make recommendations about a proposed Minnesota School for the Arts.

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II. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

II. Historical Perspective

For several decades, arts education has been considered an essential component of the total education of Minnesota students. While there have been changes in emphasis and objectives in each of the arts areas over the years, significant effort has been made by educators and citizens to strengthen the role of the arts in school programs in the last ten years. Highlights of some of the advances are illustrated in this section.

1973: Formation of the Minnesota Alliance for Arts in Education

Through funds provided by the National Alliance for Arts in Education, an outreach program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Minnesota Alliance for Arts in Education (MAAE) was organized within the Minnesota Department of Education in 1973. The MAAE board of directors was composed of educators, artists and citizens concerned with arts education, with the objective of achieving "statewide effort to develop, coordinate and implement a comprehensive arts education program for students in the State of Minnesota."

1976: Governor's Commission on the Arts

The Governor's Commission on the Arts conducted a survey in 1976 to determine the status of arts resources in Minnesota. In its report, "Minnesota: State of the Arts" the Commission investigated the roles of arts organizations, artists and the education system in the arts community. The Commission viewed arts education as basic to the total education of all students; and recognized that public schools often provide the only opportunities for many students to learn about the arts. The Commission recommended that current education funds be shifted and used to employ licensed arts specialists at the elementary level, and that more inservice training in the arts be provided for elementary classroom teachers. The Commission also recommended that the Minnesota Department of Education implement a continuous assessment of arts education.

1977: Minnesota Plan for Arts in Education

The "Minnesota Plan for Arts in Education" was written in 1977 by the Department of Education and the Minnesota Alliance for Arts in Education with funds from the United States Office of Education. The plan was designed as a model for state and local education agencies, and outlined several objectives for improving arts education in Minnesota. The plan was approved by the Minnesota State Board of Education in 1978.

1978: Minnesota Alliance for Arts in Education

The Minnesota Alliance for Arts in Education (MAAE) became an independent organization outside the Department of Education. In addition to federal and state grants, MAAE has sought and received funding from the private sector and in 1984-85 has an annual budget of \$155,000.

1979: Minnesota Statewide Assessment

In 1979, the Minnesota Department of Education expanded its assessment program to include testing in the arts. The Department tested writing in 1979-80, music in 1980-81 and visual art in 1981-82.

1979: Ad Hoc Minnesota School for the Arts Committee

With funding provided by the Northwest Area Foundation, Dr. William Jones, Director of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies, chaired a two-year study of the feasibility of a statewide arts high school. Artists, educators and citizens attended several conferences where leaders of arts high schools around the country were brought in as guest speakers/consultants. A prospectus on the proposed Minnesota School for the Arts was published and distributed in December 1980.

Legislative action was not requested in 1981 because of the budget shortfalls that year. The committee renewed its activity in 1983, updated the prospectus and distributed it to the governor, key legislators and the governor-appointed Arts Education Task Force.

1981 Legislative Action

In 1981, a bill was introduced in the Legislature and supported by the Minnesota Alliance for Arts in Education to appropriate \$200,000 for competitive grants to school districts for developing local comprehensive arts education plans. Grants of up to \$20,000 per district were to be awarded by the Council on Quality Education (CQE), in this proposed program. Hearings involving educators, citizens and students were held in education committees, but, as a whole, the bill failed to pass. A section of the bill did pass, requesting that the Department of Education conduct a needs assessment of arts education, and report back to the Legislature in January 1983.

In May 1982 a statewide survey was conducted of arts teachers seeking information on local arts programs. The information obtained from the survey was published in "Arts Education in Minnesota: 1982 Status Report." This report was delivered to the Legislature in January 1983, and was widely distributed in Minnesota.

1983: Legislative Action

The 1983 Legislature passed the Comprehensive Arts Planning Program (CAPP) bill. CAPP grants were awarded to 30 school districts to improve arts education in their individual districts. Each district formed a community-based team of eight persons representing the district and the community to plan, develop and promote comprehensive arts education in the district. The CAPP committee participated in various training sessions provided by the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Minnesota Alliance for Arts in Education staff, as well as received written materials developed by the staff of the same organizations. The CAPP districts have either completed or are currently involved in three

major types of activities, including needs assessment, development of a five-year comprehensive arts plan and curriculum development/improvement projects. CAPP committee chairpersons and members generally agreed that the CAPP program should continue in their districts, as well as statewide.

1984: Governor's Commission on Economic Vitality in the Arts

The February 1984 preliminary report by this commission offered twenty-nine recommendations pertaining to the interdependence of the arts and the total economy of Minnesota. Several of these recommendations dealt with education in some way, including the creation of a High School for the Arts, the placing of "arts ombudsmen" in school districts, expanding Master of Fine Arts programs in colleges subsidizing school performances by artists.

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III. REQUIRED INFORMATION

- A. Review of the Comprehensive Arts Planning Grants.
- B. Arts Education Needs Assessment
 - 1. Minnesota Department of Education Statistics related to Time Allotments, Staffing and Assessment Results.
 - 2. Survey of Teachers Principals, Parents and Students in Minnesota.
- C. Recommendations about Establishing a Minnesota School for the Arts.

III. REQUIRED INFORMATION

ARTS EDUCATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

THE CHARGE

By January 15, 1985, the Department of Education shall report to the education committees of the legislature recommendations for improving arts education in elementary and secondary schools.

THE FINDINGS

Key findings of various sections of this report follow.

A. Findings from the Comprehensive Arts Planning Program (CAPP)

- o Seventy-seven percent of the 30 participating districts reported the development of a five-year comprehensive plan for the arts.
- o Fifty-seven percent reported that curriculum writing in at least one of the arts had begun.
- o Forty percent have begun active fund-raising efforts to support continued arts activity.
- o CAPP district chairpersons agree that few, if any, of the CAPP activities would have occurred without CAPP program and the technical assistance provided by the Minnesota Department of Education.
- o The CAPP program has been successful in bringing communities and local districts together to enhance arts programs.

B. Arts education Needs Assessment

1. Findings from Minnesota Department of Education Statistics

- o A significant number of middle and junior high schools are not complying with State Board of Education Rules pertaining to art and music. Twenty-one percent of outstate districts responding to a telephone survey required less than 90 clock-hours of art and 27 percent did not require 90 clock-hours of music. The percentage is higher than results of a similar survey in 1982.
- o Over the past ten years, the number of visual art teachers has declined 25.9 percent. Total professional staff has declined 11.3 percent. Excluding special education teachers, whose numbers increased, professional staff decline is 18 percent. Theater staff has declined 63.4 percent. Declines in music staff, 12.5 percent, and dance staff, 11.5 percent, are closer to total staff cuts.
- o Statewide assessment results in music indicated that fourth and eighth graders performed at acceptable levels. Eleventh grade performance was considered acceptable on four of five objectives.

- o The 1979-80 writing assessment test results indicated that students produced stories that were generally coherent, well-sequenced and readable, but they lacked originality and were not particularly interesting.
- o The results of the first statewide assessment in art, 1981-82, indicated that students at all three grade levels knew very little about art history or the evidence of art in our daily lives. They did not appreciate a variety of art forms, and had developed few skills in analyzing and making judgements about art. Student scores were judged unacceptable in all but one of seventeen subobjectives.
- o Girls generally scored higher than boys in all three arts areas--art, music and writing--tested by the Minnesota Statewide Assessment.
- o Although the Minnesota State Board of Education (SBE) requirements for art, music and physical education are similar (grades K-8 in art and music, K-10 in physical education) the number of specialists in each area varies considerably. In 1983-84, there were 128 elementary art, 748 elementary music and 620 elementary physical education teachers. At the secondary level, there were 615 art teachers, 1,056 music teachers and 1,567 physical education teachers.

2. Findings from the Arts Education Survey

- o Elementary classroom teachers are responsible for nearly all the art and creative writing instruction, while music specialists are responsible for most of the music instruction.
- o Perceptions of whether arts learning opportunities have declined over the last five years vary among survey respondents. Specialists feel there have been declines. Principals and elementary teachers feel arts opportunities are about the same. The exceptions are high school principals, who report a decrease in visual art opportunities, and elementary principals, who report an increase in creative writing.
- o One-third of junior high principals reported that art and music are required for one semester. This does not meet SBE requirements of 90 clock-hours.
- o There are few special arts learning opportunities for artistically gifted or handicapped students in elementary schools, and only slightly more in secondary schools.
- o Elementary teachers have little formal training in the arts, yet express an interest in these areas and in teaching them.
- o Art and music specialists show strong educational preparation and strong convictions that teaching art or music is what they most prefer to do.
- o The use of computers as a resource is approximately 40 percent in music and creative writing instruction and slightly less in art.
- o The use of artists as a resource in teaching the arts is not high, but most respondents expressed interest in having greater access to artists in residence.

- o Music and art specialists and elementary teachers were most likely to plan field trips to places of artistic interest. Nearly half of the art, elementary and creative writing teachers felt there should be more access to field trips.
- o Art, music, and to a lesser degree, creative writing specialists provide learning experiences in the history, concepts and critical evaluation of their areas. (Results of the 1981-82 Minnesota Assessment in Art show, however, that students have not learned these aspects of the arts to the level expected.)
- o Most survey respondents agree with the statements that more funds should be allocated for the arts, more emphasis should be placed on the arts and more opportunities should be provided for students talented in the arts.
- o Major problems identified by elementary teachers and arts specialists include: 1) student difficulty in scheduling arts classes, 2) lack of school time to schedule the arts, and 3) lack of time to plan arts learning experiences.
- o Visual art teachers felt that safety of art facilities was a problem, e.g., poorly vented kilns or use of hazardous materials.
- o Items deemed not a problem by most teachers were: 1) student interest, and 2) maintaining discipline in class.
- o There was overwhelming agreement among teachers and principals that arts education is essential for all students. Parents and students agreed with the statement that the arts are as important as other subject areas.
- o In general, students and specialists desire more opportunities for students in the arts.
- o Parents felt more resources for teaching arts should be made available for all students, as well as specially talented students.
- o Wide variation in teaching loads are found among the arts disciplines. Teaching loads were highest for elementary art (416) and music teachers (607).
- o A small proportion of principals have extensive arts training, but over half have taken courses or workshops in arts areas. A high proportion personally participate in the arts, e.g., are active in singing or drama groups.
- o Arts specialists feel that a major problem in teaching the arts is a lack of student competency in arts, based on past experience.
- o Elementary teachers feel that their own lack of preparation in teaching the arts is a major problem.
- o Arts teachers felt the lack of coordination with teachers in the same discipline was a problem.
- o Though enthusiasm for teaching has declined among some arts specialists, nearly 45 percent of art, creative writing and music specialists say their enthusiasm has increased or remained the same.

- o In conclusion, in the view of MDE, while this survey attempted to obtain an accurate picture of arts education as a whole, there is a problem dealing with the generic term "arts education." Nearly all data collected illustrates the extreme variance between arts disciplines. Each one has distinct needs and methods of improvement.

C. Recommendations for Establishing a Minnesota School for the Arts

Findings from the Minnesota School for the Arts Report

- o The purpose of the Minnesota School for the Arts and Resource Center is to provide expanded opportunities in the arts for gifted and talented youth in Minnesota.
- o The school will have a strong emphasis on high academic standards and artistic excellence.
- o It will serve as a resource for the Minnesota public school system and arts institutions.
- o The school will be funded by monies from the new Charitable Gambling Tax, and therefore, will not reduce funds for current arts education programs in schools.
- o The school will enroll 400-500 students in grades nine through twelve. It will be a public school, tuition-free, open to all gifted high school students in Minnesota.
- o The school will address two of the most critical factors in the education of gifted students: 1) the opportunities for total immersion in their areas of interest and 2) the reinforcement from peers who are equally interested and gifted in those areas.
- o Five proposals for possible sites of the school have been submitted. Final site selection will be made by the School Board of the Minnesota School for the Arts.
- o It is proposed that the Resource Center will act as a coordinating body for arts education in Minnesota. It will offer such services as extension programs for students and teachers, summer institutes, curriculum development, teacher education and exchange programs. Other groups may be contracted to provide some of these services.
- o The school will be governed by an independent fifteen-member School Board.
- o A core staff will be hired for each of six arts disciplines and general studies. The general studies faculty will be licensed teachers. Members of the arts faculties will not be required to be licensed teachers.
- o The curriculum will be a strong interdisciplinary education program. A strong general studies curriculum will be offered with special programs in dance, literary arts, media arts, music, theater and visual arts.
- o The primary focus of the school program will not be to train performing artists, but to prepare students for their next step after graduation, whether it be higher education in any field or in a vocation.

- o Student selection procedures will involve a number of elements to assess the needs, abilities, creativity and motivation of candidates. The assessments may include interviews, letters of recommendations, portfolios, evaluation of performances or products, and student essays. Other considerations will include equity factors such as geography, race and sex.

IV. Arts Education Recommendations

Findings from Recent Arts Education Research

- o Students in schools employing elementary music specialists performed better on the fourth grade statewide music assessment test in 1980-81 than those students whose schools did not employ music specialists.
- o Fourth grade students generally performed better on the 1981-82 art assessment test if their art classes were taught by art specialists who used a curriculum and a variety of visual resources.

Findings from National Education Reports

- o Most recent education reports advocate improvements in the "basics," usually defined as English, mathematics, science and social studies, but many of them advocate improvement in arts education as well.
- o "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform" by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, recommends that high schools provide rigorous programs in the fine and performing arts.
- o The College Board Report "Academic Preparation for College" includes the arts as one of six basics to be included in the school curriculum.
- o John Goodlad, author of "A Place Called School" views the arts as one of the "five fingers" of human knowledge, along with mathematics and science, literature and language, society and social studies, and the vocations.
- o Ernest Boyer's, "High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America", lists the arts as second curriculum priority, after language, in the proposed core of common learning. This proposed core includes nine subject areas.